

CORRESPONDENCE

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MORBIDITY AND MORTALITY IN THE FIRST YEAR OF LIFE

To the Editor, The Eugenics Review.

Sir,—Dr. Lewis-Faning and I have carefully considered the review of *Morbidity and Mortality in the First Year of Life* which starts on page 109 in the July 1959 number of the REVIEW.

While we are doubtful if it is worthwhile attempting to make a rejoinder to Dr. J. P. M. Tizard's detailed criticism at this long interval after the publication of the book, the following points might be made:

(1) We agree with Dr. Tizard's broad conclusions about the usefulness of surveys of this kind. They are indeed substantially a reiteration of some of the conclusions we ourselves stated. What should be borne in mind, of course, is that the morbidity and mortality survey was planned ten years ago and therefore at a time when there was no conclusive information about the usefulness of surveys of this kind.

(2) It might also be stated that all differences mentioned in the text were tested and found to be significant at the 0.05 level. This was stated in the penultimate draft but deleted on editorial grounds (perhaps mistakenly) before going to press.

(3) In all statistical publications it is, in my view, vitally important to keep in mind the class of reader for whom the particular work is written. This work was written neither for the casual reader nor for the technical statistician. It was intended for intelligent public health and clinical readers and our statistics were presented accordingly.

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INTRA-UTERINE DEVICES

To the Editor, The Eugenics Review

Sir,—In the July edition of THE EUGENICS REVIEW there are references, in reviews by Herbert Brewer of two medical books, to intra-uterine devices. In one he mentions that in German literature alone forty-one deaths and four hundred and fifty-five serious pathological conditions had been recorded following their use; and in the other "nothing can obscure the fact that all competent opinion now condemns intra-uterine contraceptive devices as pernicious."

I think that this opinion must be challenged and a clear distinction drawn between the "Grafenberg Ring" and all the other available intra-uterine devices such as "Goldstem" and "Wishbone Pessaries." Medical Gynaecological authorities are unanimous in their denunciation of the latter but there is a good deal of revival of interest in the possibilities of the "Grafenberg Ring" and a number of extremely competent gynaecologists who find it quite harmless. Infection is easily avoided by the strict aseptic technique which should accompany any intra-uterine manoeuvre (the other devices mentioned keep the cervix open and make possible an ascending infection.) I know of no figures suggesting an increasing incidence of carcinoma where "Grafenberg Rings" are used. Some thickening of the endometrium can occur but this seems harmless enough and many of the doctors who use this method limit its use to those who have finished bearing children. The Grafenberg Rings do not by any means provide an infallible method of birth control and cases have been quoted of the delivery at term of the baby plus "Grafenberg Ring" without any harm resulting to the child.

I know of several studies at present being undertaken by competent gynaecologists in this